



# Bunny Lu's House Rabbit News

Newsletter for Bunny Lu Adoptions  
Spring/Summer 2006

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January 2006 marked Bunny Lu's seventh anniversary! Mary Ellen and the Board of Directors would like to thank everyone who has supported our efforts to help rescue and rehome the over 500 bunnies that have come through our door. Your time and financial contributions have allowed us to help many rabbits who were abused, abandoned, and/or neglected to find happy permanent homes. Of course, it has been a learning experience for us. We think we've developed good policies and procedures for rabbit rescue and rehabilitation, and hope to help a lot more bunnies in the years to come. This edition is dedicated to you—our loyal supporters. Thank you!

**A retrospective:** It all began in January 1999 when a friend asked Mary Ellen Glover to help educate people about rabbit care in the hopes of deterring people from getting "Easter Rabbits." Before long, Mary Ellen had several foster bunnies in her care and was looking for homes for them... [Bunny Lu Adoptions was founded!](#)

In early spring 1999, Linda Seeman found a flyer Mary Ellen had posted at a Manassas Petsmart store and called to help. Every weekend, Mary Ellen and Linda took foster rabbits and educational material to the local PetCo and PetSmart Adoption Day events in the hopes of finding homes. Several foster buns were adopted, lots of people were educated about proper house rabbit care, and more rabbits were rescued and brought into foster care. As more and more people contacted Bunny Lu for help and assistance, the decision was made to set up a Board of Directors, incorporate the organization with the Commonwealth of Virginia, and apply for tax-exempt status. All of this was accomplished on a first try! By April 2000, Bunny Lu was a legitimate nonprofit 501C3 Domestic Rabbit Rescue Organization.

While all of this was going on, Mary Ellen and her husband Al moved from their townhouse into a single-family home. Special rooms were allotted for "bunny areas," but before long, it became obvious more space was needed to accommodate every bun. Al and Mary Ellen donated their time and money to build a 16' x 20' addition onto their home just for the bunnies. In 2003, the work was done and every bunny moved in. Over the next few years, foster bunnies started spreading into the sunroom, spare bedrooms and office. Poor Al and Mary Ellen couldn't walk anywhere in their own home without meeting a bunny. Fortunately, some Bunny Lu volunteers started fostering in their homes and more bunnies got adopted.

Now as Bunny Lu enters its eighth year, it is obvious Bunny Lu needs more room to grow. Since the money is not there to build a separate facility to house the bunnies and the supplies, Mary Ellen and Al are looking for another place to live that has more space for the bunnies, and more room for Bunny Lu to grow. Stay tuned...



## *From the Editor...*

I remember those early days when Mary Ellen and I would set up at the PetSmart and PetCo stores in Manassas and Fairfax. As excited as we were to find homes for the foster buns, we were just as protective of the buns who were there with us as representatives. Not everyone was knowledgeable about a bunny's gentle nature, and some of the people bringing in predatory animals (mostly dogs) just didn't understand how scared our bunnies were. The loud noises and animal smells upset the bunnies, and we couldn't keep them in the store too long for fear they would become overly stressed. After setting up at some larger community events such as Non-Profit Days at Manassas Mall and their Pet Connection, Mary Ellen and I decided there was a better way to get buns adopted without terrifying them. We expanded the website with photos of all our buns, and associated ourselves with Petfinder.com, an online pet adoption group associated with the ASPCA. Alternative opportunities presented themselves to us such as advertising in Rabbits Magazine and the Pet Lovers Companion, establishing a business phone with a telephone book listing making it easier for people to find us, and some smaller educational events that didn't require the buns to be overly exposed to predatory animals. More people started volunteering to help us and they have been a true blessing, enabling us to help more rabbits. Now, our reputation is well established mostly because of word of mouth from our supporters who know we have the buns best interests at heart. Thank you!!

Bunny Lu has a very strong commitment to the bunnies we rescue and take into foster care to make their life better. Let's face it---rabbits who come into foster care have been disposed of. The person who got them, is no longer interested in caring for them and some of these bunnies come to Bunny Lu in pretty bad shape. Besides providing each bunny with topnotch veterinary care, a healthy diet, and a safe environment, these buns are given lots of TLC. Actually, when I visit the foster bunnies, I am thankful to see how well adjusted and happy they are. And Bunny Lu wants it to stay that way. While every effort is made to locate the best possible home for the foster bunnies, things sometimes don't work out as hoped. Since the beginning, Bunny Lu's adoption contract requires any bunny adopted from Bunny Lu be returned to Bunny Lu no matter what. A Bunny Lu bunny is **never** to be taken to an animal shelter, **never** given away to someone else, **never** let loose. **Never**. Bunny Lu promises each bunny a safe and loving home forever and we intend to keep that promise.

Finally, this issue has the latest information about what we have been up to, as well as some interesting articles. My husband Brian wrote an article about Bunny Lu. Brian, and Mary Ellen's husband Al, have been there since Day 1 and have been instrumental in helping Bunny Lu become what it is today. It is interesting to read a spouse's perspective because they are the people behind the scenes who are patient and understanding when one of us brings home another sick or abandoned bunny, and tolerates a change in plans at the last minute. It would be difficult to accomplish anything without their support. On a more technical note, there are two articles called "Living with Allergies" on page 11, and Rabbit Health Care, Part 2, page 13. In addition, our bunny pages will entertain you with photos of our foster buns, both pairs and singles, looking for loving homes...Linda, editor

*\*\*\*Bunny Lu respects your privacy and does not share our mailing list with any other organization. If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please contact: [maillist@bunnylu.org](mailto:maillist@bunnylu.org)*



Bunny Lu Adoptions, Inc., is a tax exempt (501 C3 nonprofit) domestic rabbit rescue incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia, dedicated to helping abused, abandoned and neglected rabbits with food, medical needs and a safe indoor environment until a more permanent home is found. For more information about Bunny Lu, please visit our website:

[www.bunnylu.org](http://www.bunnylu.org) or contact us at: P.O. Box 1036, Manassas, VA 20108. Telephone: 703-335-9176  
Board of Directors: Mary Ellen Glover, President; Mary O'Malley, Treasurer  
Board Members: Stacey Hartman, Crys Turner, Will and Pam McKay, Dana Hansen, and Linda Seeman  
Bunny Lu House Rabbit News Editor: Linda Seeman  
Bunny Lu Website Guru: Mary O'Malley



## Bunny Lu “Hoppenings”

**Bunny Lu Adoptions rescued and fostered 132 rabbits and found loving homes for 105 of these buns during fiscal year 2005—our best year ever!!** We'd like to welcome new foster parents Heather and Ben who are fostering Mocha and her 4 babies. A reminder that if you are interested in fostering a bunny or two for us, please contact Linda: [askrabbitleady@hotmail.com](mailto:askrabbitleady@hotmail.com) or Mary Ellen: [Maryellen@bunnylu.org](mailto:Maryellen@bunnylu.org). Approved foster homes are provided with cube cages, hay, pellets, and vet care. Foster parents are responsible for fresh veggies, daily care, some transportation, and lots of TLC.



We'd like to thank everyone who attended and helped make our **Annual Open House and Fundraiser on November 6, 2005** a huge success. Special thanks to our guests **Diane Roadcap**, the pet psychic (photo, left), as well as **Joann Scott**, Vet Tech at Blue Ridge Veterinary Associates in Purcellville, VA. Once again Diane wowed us with her gifts of animal communication. Joann gave an excellent presentation on the importance of getting wellness exams for your rabbit(s), and some of the things you can expect if your rabbit needs surgery or dental procedures.

Visit Diane's website: [www.animalstalktoo.com](http://www.animalstalktoo.com)

Bunny Lu set up at the **World of Pets Expo held at the Timonium Fairgrounds in Baltimore, MD January 28 & 29, 2006**. This was the first time we've driven out of state to attend an event such as this. Bubba, a 20-pound Flemish Giant, was a real attraction for most people who had never seen one of the larger rabbit breeds. It was obvious by their comments that the people in Baltimore are not as familiar with house rabbits as those in Northern Virginia, so we were happy to start the education process.



Thanks to everyone who stopped by to see us at the **Washington Pet Expo held at the Dulles Convention Center in Chantilly, VA March 31-April 2**. This was our fifth appearance at this annual event and it is surely one of our best. Not only does it give us the opportunity to meet and to educate lots of people BEFORE Easter, but it is also a good time for you to buy lots of goodies for you and your buns. We have new bunny T-shirt designs, bunny cards, placemats and prints, as well as lots of Busy Bunny products and other play toys for your favorite lagomorph(s).

Hopefully, everyone was tuned in to **Channel 9/WUSA News** in Washington DC on October 29 to see Bunny Lu's very own Mary O'Malley interviewed by Tony Pann on air. **Violet and Snoopy** were very good buns during their television debut and important information about bunny temperament and care were provided. Linda was able to show the VHS recording at the November Open House and everyone agreed Mary, Violet and Snoopy were superb Bunny Lu representatives. Thanks!

Linda gave a rabbit care presentation to the preschoolers at the **ACTS Daycare Center in Woodbridge, VA** on March 29, 2006. Special thanks to her 11+ year-old bunny, Brandi, who was perfect and so patient with all the children who were excited to meet a “real” bunny.

Welcome new Bunny Lu Board members, Will and Pam McKay, and Dana Hansen. Best Wishes to Tina Scott who leaves the BOD to concentrate on the birth of her first child. Congratulations to Board Member Stacey Hartman, and her husband Walter, on the birth of their first child Lance.

A new online support group for those people who have adopted bunnies from Bunny Lu is now available. Members can post funny stories and photos of their buns, as well as request help or provide insight to others who might be dealing with some common or unusual bunny situations. Visit our website for more information. Thanks to Walter Hartman for the idea and to Mary O for setting up the site online.



A Special Thank You to our volunteers who perform vet runs, cleaning and fostering duties and administrative support: We couldn't do it without you!!



Heather Somerville ♥ Angel Brooks ♥ Lindsay & Colin Weiner ♥ Kara Murdock ♥  
 Shelby Blauert ♥ Clara Bergeron ♥ Dana Hansen ♥ Dave & Jen Pecora ♥ Crys Turner ♥  
 Heather Garland & Ben Selig ♥ Stacey and Walter Hartman ♥ Mary Ellen Glover ♥  
 Linda & Brian Seeman



### Hay Anyone?????

The sheds are full of hay and supplies for those of you in need. The hay is wonderful fresh timothy from Canada. It looks and smells good enough to eat. The buns agree. **Please remember supplies are only available by appointment on weekends.** Please call Mary Ellen in advance to let her know you will be by.

### **A Very Special Thank You for your tax-deductible donation!!!!**

Bunny Buddies ♥ Andy & Evette Ross ♥ Angie Orndorff ♥ Bethany & Anita Mills ♥ Colin & Lindsay Weiner ♥ Dan McGrough ♥ Gary & Kim Curtis ♥ John & Bev Lane ♥ James & Roberta Dale ♥ Ricky & Peggy Parsons ♥ Tracey Stockman ♥ John & Suzanne Leonard ♥ John White ♥ John & Wendy Ealding ♥ Kim Brown ♥ Madeline Thumith ♥ Albert & Linda Somerville ♥ Andrew & Cynthia Bartoriello ♥ Gale Richards ♥ Gregory & Pam Skaluba ♥ Constance Hardy ♥ Dana Fountain ♥ David Pecora ♥ Debra Tope ♥ Gary & Jennifer Armida ♥ Johanna Newhouse ♥ Laurel Wanrow ♥ James & Dorothy Knapp ♥ Janelle & Marie Dietrich ♥ Janice Cairns ♥ Jennifer Messersmith ♥ John and Jo Ann Evans ♥ Rob & Jan Mouw ♥ Sandra Morris ♥ Susan Wong ♥ Talisha Herring ♥ Tanya Iacaruso ♥ Theodore & Rebecca Harben ♥ Kristina Lauterbach ♥ Anne Moriarty ♥ George & Paula Reaney ♥ John & Candy Mitchell ♥ M. Cianos ♥ Alyson Stone ♥ American Headset/Ben Selig ♥ Kristina Smith Melinda Livingston Nancy Sweickart Nancy Sue Carr ♥ Christine Mannino Charles & Karen Rivenback ♥ Rita Creitz ♥ Susan Groth ♥ Todd & Nicole Robinson ♥ Kate Claussens ♥ Dave Ferguson ♥ Ellen Kabat ♥ James Roce ♥ Julie Staiger ♥ Michael & Laura Cruise ♥ Michelle Krysztofiak ♥ Nicholas & Rebecca Verna ♥ William & Pam McKay ♥ Wyling Liew ♥ William & Phyllis Buff ♥ Amy Wilson ♥ Bethany & Anita Mills ♥ Candace Joy ♥ Celia Jacobs ♥ Brandy McGuire ♥ Cesar Filippi ♥ Elizabeth Ceballos & David Kirby ♥ James & Gwen Costa ♥ Maile Gesling ♥ Marie Cardiff-Beatty and Joseph Beatty ♥ Neil Benton ♥ Rachel Wiseman ♥ Sarah Barger ♥ Scott Baker & Paulette Lincoln-Baker ♥ Linda & Brian Seeman ♥ Roberta Moreland ♥ Patty Caruthers Hight ♥ Mary Ellen Glover ♥ Daniel & Karen Moran ♥ Richard Pfiester ♥ Lisa & Paul at the Busy Bunny ♥ Drs. Campbell & Behm at Blue Ridge Veterinary Associates ♥

**We'd especially like to thank the anonymous person who placed a \$100 bill into our donation box at the 2006 Pet Expo in Chantilly.**

## Meet some of our Dedicated Volunteers



Dana Hansen (left), mom to Beatrix, lovingly known as Bea, started volunteering with Bunny Lu in January 2004. A resident of Winchester, VA, Dana is an elementary school teacher who thinks nothing of driving to our main foster home in Manassas to help with....whatever needs to be done. Dana has been fostering various Bunny Lu buns since 2004, but just recently received Bea's blessing to continue after Bea told Diane Roadcap she was secure enough in her "bunnyness" to share her home with other bunnies on a **temporary** basis. Dana and Bea provide crucial foster space and lots of TLC to many homeless bunnies. Besides recently joining Bunny Lu's Board of Directors, Dana was one of the forces behind Bunny Lu's yard sale last September that brought in \$\$\$\$\$ for our efforts. Thanks Dana!!



Jennifer Pecora (right) is a serious Bunny Lu volunteer. She came all the way from Idaho to volunteer at the Bunny Lu booth at the 2006 Pet Expo in Chantilly!! Jen and husband Dave have adopted and fostered many Bunny Lu buns, and also got involved doing some of the bunny maintenance activities (litter box brigade) while they were here temporarily for Dave's job. This couple is so into bunnies that when the Bunderground hit a snag in getting bunnies Lisa and Kelly out to Idaho, Jen flew into Kentucky and rented an SUV to drive them to Idaho. Now that's dedication and a real love of buns. Thanks Jen and Dave!



## Bunny Snapshots

Congratulations to **Karma and Charlie Brown** (left) who recently bonded!! (Thanks to Bunny Mom Sarah for sending us this photo of the loving couple)

**Billy Barker Buff** (right) taking a snooze (thanks to Bunny Mom Phyllis for sending us this photo)



## Whatever Happened To???????

*Editors note: Have you adopted a bunny from Bunny Lu? Tell us how things are going and send us a photo. We'll print them in future newsletters. Just email your stories with photo to [askrabbitleady@hotmail.com](mailto:askrabbitleady@hotmail.com)*

## New Bunny Designs: Note Cards, Prints

We have lots of new bunny art for sale with all proceeds going towards the foster bunnies. These adorable bunnies have been rescued by Bunny Lu and now grace the front of note cards, prints, T-shirts, placemats and stickers. These items provide the perfect opportunity for you to show the world your love of bunnies. There are many designs available by artists Evonne Vey and Kristine Kasheta. The cards are blank inside for your own message, with a description of Bunny Lu's mission on the back. They also make a nice thank you card or note for holiday sending. Each card is \$2 or 3/\$5, and t-shirts start at \$15 depending on design. Please see website for details.



## Bunny pairs looking for Loving Families

"Honeybun and I are looking for someone who doesn't mind dicing carrots or scratching itches since I have had my front incisors removed. We are happy to be in a safe environment, but after 2 years in foster care we think it is time to have a family of our own. We really are sweet and just want a chance to show what greatly buns we are." Ask for SNOWFLAKE (white) & HONEYBUN (fawn), both minilops.



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"Bonnie and I are looking for someone who loves friendly bunnies, and who is brave enough to withstand a bunny scurrying up your body to get to papaya treats! Interested person(s) should also enjoy buying us toys since we love to play." Ask for BONNIE (black fur) & CLYDE (California Mix), a young pair of up ear buns born September 2004 who dearly love each other.

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"Alex and I are a devoted minilop pair looking for a loving family to provide us with the love and security we missed with our previous family. We are working on trusting others after being carelessly taken to the animal shelter not long after Easter 2005. Interested person(s) would need to provide reassurance and lots of treats, especially banana (our favorite)." Ask for GOLDIE (fawn) & ALEX (frost), both minilops.



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"Pete and I are looking for someone with previous bunny experience who will appreciate and acknowledge that 5-year old bunnies can be a little bit set in their ways. While we are protective of each other, love and patience will help us develop a strong sense of trust with a loving family. Playtime and lots of space to run around in are important to us, and cardboard tunnels are a must." Ask for PETE (a minilop boy with agouti fur) & WENDY (a Hotot mix).

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"Sonny and I are looking for someone who likes to give lots of treats to good bunnies like us, and who will enjoy watching us beg for more. We are shameless!! Even though Sonny and I are competitive when it comes to food, we adore each other and enjoy having lots of room to run the Bunny 500 race." Ask for MARCY (a beautiful white New Zealand mix girl) and SONNY (a handsome fawn and white Dutch boy), both born in April 2005.

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"No you are not seeing double, we just look a lot alike. April and I would love for someone to welcome us into their family and treasure us for the great buns we are. This is especially important for my companion who has been in foster care since 1 day of age. As the older and more experienced guy, I know the importance of a loving family. We are a cute pair who loves our tunnel." Ask for APRIL & ARCHIE (fawn colored minilops).



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"After being abandoned at a young age at a local pet store with 2 other bunnies, I was lucky enough to be taken into foster care by Bunny Lu where I met and bonded with a very beautiful companion bunny named Phoebe who was very scared and insecure. You see, we were both Easter bunnies in 2005 and our families got rid of us. My sweet and gentle nature helped calm Phoebe down and she is now an attention seeker! We love playing with toys, although Phoebe loves to eat too." Ask for PHOEBE (a white minilop with ruby eyes) and PATRICK (a fawn colored minilop). They are not fond of cats or dogs.

"Pansy and I are so ready to have a loving family. I was let loose to fend for myself and got hurt. Some nice person found me injured along the side of the road and took me to Bunny Lu. Fortunately, my injuries weren't that severe.... I had a hernia repair and a neuter. Once I felt better, I was introduced to Pansy, a solid blue minilop who was born at the shelter on January 15, 2005. She has helped me blossom, and we are both social and friendly." Ask for HUGH (broken blue minilop, about 2 years old) and PANSY. Not fond of dogs.



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"Will and I are a sweet and adorable pair of buns who are a bit shy and not quite sure about being picked up unless you have a treat. Then we are your best friends! We'd do best in a home without children or dogs." Ask for WILL (solid blue) & GRACE (broken blue).

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"If you have never had rabbits before, or even if you have, we are the buns for you!! Lola and I are both friendly, and we love to run and play. While we are devoted to each other, having a loving family who allows us to participate in activities is our fondest wish." Ask for LOLA (broken blue) & SHADOW (solid blue).



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"Thumper and I were born in early 2005. I am a really cute Netherland dwarf, and he is a handsome minilop. It's so nice to be safe and have a friend but we would really like a loving family of our own." Ask for BONBON & THUMPER

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"My son Pumpkin and I were carelessly set loose by our previous family and were lucky a predator did not find us. We are happy to be in a safe place and my foster Mom continues to tell me what a handsome and sweet guy I am. I am trying to help Pumpkin understand that one day we will find a family of our own who will love us forever. Ask for POPPA BUN (French Lop Mix, age 4) and PUMPKIN (Satin/French Lop mix boy, age 2).



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"Sunny (not pictured) and I were rescued as a stray at a local park in early January--BRRRR!. The day after being rescued, Sunny gave birth to 5 babies! And being the handsome guy I am she had 5 more babies, 30 days later! We were separated again but have now been spay/neutered and are back together. We are a wonderful young pair and are perfect for first time bunny parents. I know there is someone out there who wants really sweet, social bunnies to give lots of attention and to love!" Ask for BUCKAROO & SUNNY (both Dutch).



## Single Buns looking for Loving Families

"I was left at the local shelter and felt really sad. Bunny Lu recognized what a good bunny I was and took me into foster care. This experience has made me shy and insecure so I am hoping to find someone who will give me lots of love and attention. I love to play and have heard Mary Ellen loves to watch my antics." Ask for HENRY SNOW (young minilop)



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"I get all excited to see anyone because I just discovered how wonderful pats and kisses are. After being in an outside hutch for 6 years, I see now what I missed out on. But very few people can resist my charm and I am hoping to find a wonderful family real soon who will love me for the snuggle bun I am." Ask for CLOVER (age 6 years.)

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EDGAR is lovingly called the "Grandfather of Bunny Lu" since his date of birth is 1995. This 11 year old was an outdoor hutch bunny who did not receive much attention until arriving at Bunny Lu. He enjoys being inside, loves all the attention he is getting (he even gives nose kisses), and eats whatever he is fed. Edgar needs someone who understands the difficulties he has faced and is able to give him the love and attention he deserves.



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SABRINA is a sweet 2-year-old Californian girl who lost her home due to "allergies". She answers to her name and has an excellent personality. Sabrina loves to run through her cardboard tube and play with her toys.



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"My previous family dumped me at a pet store. How crappy is that? I'm young and kind of different looking, but I am really nice. I've heard it's what's inside that counts. Ask for SKIPPY (minirex)



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"I am trying to deal with the poor treatment I had before coming to Bunny Lu. Thank goodness for foster Mom Crys, who is teaching me that there really are nice people in the world. I don't like dogs or cats, and don't ever want to be kept caged 24/7 again. While I'm not high maintenance, I do need someone with previous rabbit experience." Ask for SOPHIA (born Feb 2002).



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Hi, I'm Holly and if you are looking for an adorable young bunny who loves attention, you have found her. I enjoy playtime and toys and would even like to have a bunny companion. Know any bun??" Ask for HOLLY (born Dec 2005)

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"I was taken to the shelter where I gave birth to 4 little girls in Jan 2006; Java, Chai, Chip and Chino. Since they are old enough I am on my own again and looking for a loving family to spoil me. I like to snuggle and give kisses. Do you like bunny kisses?" Ask for MOCA (minilop, estimated birth date March 2005)





"I am Java, one of Moca's daughters (previous photo). My coloring is similar to Mom's, but my sisters all have black fur. Bunny Lu took us in and made sure we had lots of contact with people so my sisters and I are very social. I am probably the most exploratory and have been called an escape artist." Ask for JAVA.

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I am a wonderful bunny. I have a very thick coat (no chance of going bald!) and need to be combed. I have very good litter habits. Diane Roadcap recently visited and I told her I would like a friend, as I get lonely at nights. Might you have a nice doe looking for a friend? Please call and make an appointment to visit me.... I promise to be good." Ask for me, HARVEY



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I was born November 2005, and shared a room with my brother. Being typical boys, we did not get along all of the time.... and I got hurt. I arrived at Bunny Lu along with the 8 babies (below). Because I had a large abscess on my back (from my brother picking on me), and needed immediate medical attention, Bunny Lu made a space available for me to stay with them. I immediately went to Dr Campbell at Blue Ridge Vet Assoc in Purcellville, VA where I was neutered, microchipped and had my the abscess tended to...I have stitches and Dr Campbell has me on some potent meds to fight infection. I am expected to make a full recovery, but I will be staying at Bunny Lu

and carefully monitored until I am all-better. Please think about giving me a permanent home...I am a very sweet little bunny." Ask for TONY.

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"I am one of the babies Tony is talking about (above). My previous family didn't realize they had a boy and a girl bunny and things happened. The result is me and my 7 brothers and sisters. We are all adorable but were just born in April 2006, so we have more growing to do. We already trust people and have decided it's fun to be held. My brothers and sisters all look like me—pretty cute, huh??" ASK about PABLO and siblings ---they should be ready for adoption in about 5 months.



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## **BUNNY LU---Why You Should Care: by Brian Seeman**

Quality and quantity are two good criteria to judge the excellence of an organization. Quality is subjective, and the more difficult of the two criteria, so let us start there. Many readers of this newsletter are aware of the wonderful care that bunnies receive from Bunny Lu. A safe environment, lots of good food and water, medical needs met to include a spay/neuter procedure for every bunny, a companion bunny for most of them, a microchip insertion for permanent identification, and lots of loving and kisses. These fortunate few bunnies get this care due to the dedicated efforts of many volunteers, but primarily because two women saw a need for this level of concern and care back in 1999, and have dedicated themselves to being the very best rabbit proponents they know how to be. That is not news to those of you who know Mary Ellen Glover and Linda Seeman.

One important factor in quality is expertise. Bunny Lu has accepted more than 500 bunnies since 1999. All have been treated in the same excellent way discussed above. But expertise is also knowledge, and it may surprise some to know that Linda has been Rabbit Lady on the Planet Pets website for almost seven years. During this time, she has answered more than 7,000 questions from people around the globe, from Hong Kong to Budapest, from Australia to England. Bunny health questions and behavioral questions and practically any thing you can imagine. She gives thoughtful and well researched answers, always from the same perspective: what is best for the bunny. Seven thousand is a big number, but she also gets a lot of telephone calls each week from those needing her bunny expertise. Beyond this, she has published a number of articles like her items on Bloat and Stasis. If you have read the Bunny Lu Standards of Care, you can see her expertise since she wrote the pamphlet from scratch. Plainly written, it answers 90% of all questions a rabbit owner will have, and it is

made available at no cost to those who need it. Linda knows that information needs to be understandable and shared, and it is this approach that defines how Bunny Lu goes about the important business of helping bunnies.

Another factor in quality is time devoted to the cause. Linda spends at least 1,500 hours a year on bunny care. Essentially a full time job but without pay. While I cannot speak with certainty about Mary Ellen, my instinct tells me she spends even more time than that on rabbit issues. She formed Bunny Lu back in 1999, and is the creative force behind many of the wonderful things that Bunny Lu does. I think of her as a zealot, but only in a good way from a rabbit's perspective. There is nothing she would not do for a bunny, and her actions over the years have proved it. Her home has been the primary repository for Bunny Lu bunnies over the years, and that is a HUGE amount of daily work. She has been successful in getting others to assist in the care of the bunnies, and has helped create several foster homes for our bunnies. She goes off on bunny rescue missions at the drop of a hat, personally drives the truck to pick up the hay that everyone loves so much from her "secret location," sets up at animal fairs to promote the care of rabbits, often goes on medical missions to Drs Behm and Campbell at Blue Ridge Veterinary Clinic, and spends a lot of time thinking about new ways to promote the well being of bunnies. Many readers of this newsletter see this all come together at the November Open House that has become so popular, but have no idea how much effort goes into making this all happen. Now you have some idea.

Passion and availability are two other factors in quality. The passion for rabbit well being that these two women share comes through in some of the words in previous paragraphs. It is visceral and real, and little would have been accomplished at Bunny Lu since 1999 without this passion. If you talk to either one of them, this passion is evident. As it is evident in the tears they shed and share when things sort of fall apart which is simply the way it sometimes happens in spite of your best effort. But also smiles and feelings of joy when things go right as they usually do. And, they are both always available to help with rabbit care or questions. Frankly, it sometimes feels like I am married to an on call doctor. But I cannot tell the readers of the number of times we have heard from people with a problem that state Bunny Lu was the only organization to respond to their needs with advice or information or home visits, etc. While Bunny Lu cannot rescue every rabbit in need due to limitations on housing facilities, we can and do make a 100% effort to respond to EVERY question or concern that is brought to us.

Turning to quantity, the difference between Bunny Lu and other rabbit rescue organizations in this area is startling. While all animal rescue organizations do good work, not all are as focused on the single objective of rescuing, nurturing and then placing animals in good homes, as is Bunny Lu. Already mentioned is the fact that over 500 bunnies have been rescued by Bunny Lu since 1999. Just in 2005, Bunny Lu took in 132 rabbits and found loving homes for 105. By way of comparison, **the** big name rabbit rescue group in this area placed 44 rabbits in 2005, and another group, actually a combination of two groups, placed 11 in 2005. I am not just making this stuff up; the information is in their published newsletters. These groups seem to be proud of their accomplishments. Well, the numbers along with the quality care Bunny Lu bunnies receive speaks for themselves. Except for the annual open house in November, you will find very little of a social nature when you come to Bunny Lu.

What do you get when you get Bunny Lu? The dedicated effort of Mary Ellen and Linda, and the rest of the organization's volunteers. Seven years of expertise. Smiles and tears. For those of you who have been to our open houses, think back to the conversations you heard there. I'll bet you will agree they were most all about the care of bunnies and your wonderful experiences with them. For those of you who have not attended, please drop in for the next one this November and see if what I have written here is true. If ever an organization deserved your support, Bunny Lu is it.

Bunny Lu. An organization that leads with their hearts. Imagine that.

FOOTNOTE: Linda is my wife, so some might think I am prejudiced. You can judge for yourselves when you meet her. Both Mary Ellen and Linda HATE being singled out, so I had to extract a promise that they would let me write this article as I saw fit without their editing it. They will be embarrassed by some of the nice things I have said, but too bad. They have earned every word.

## Veterinary Consult: Living with Allergies



*The Editor is pre-empting the veterinary article normally presented here to present a helpful article for humans entitled, "Living with Allergies: Suggestions for Keeping Your Rabbit." Special thanks to OREO (Ontario Rabbit Education Organization) for graciously giving us permission to reprint the article. The link can be found on our website, [www.bunnylu.org](http://www.bunnylu.org).*



Try to keep this and the fact that rabbits need hay as part of their daily diet in mind before you get a rabbit. Here are some coping strategies that our members with allergies use to help them continue to live happily with their rabbits.

It is a typical morning: the bunnies chase me around, tripping me up while I make coffee. I pick up Theo, the most squeezable of my rabbits, and bury my face in that silky spot between his shoulder blades. A few seconds later my nose twitches, my eyes run, and I start to feel wheezy. It's allergy season and, with all the pollen and grass allergens already bombarding my system, even a little snuffle of bunny fur is enough to set my allergies off. At least this reminds me to take my allergy medications: prescription antihistamine eye-drops, puffers, nasal spray, and an over-the-counter anti-histamine pill.

I've had multiple allergies as long as I can remember. Because I've lived with them for so long I pretty much accept the symptoms. As a child, I had a cat named Peppermint Molasses. Although I wasn't allergic to him at first, after a few months I became severely allergic to him. I'd roll out of bed in the morning, wheezing, itching and sneezing because I let the cat sleep with me. My mom often threatened to get rid of the cat. She never did, and I'll always be thankful for that. Not only did I get to keep Peppermint Molasses, but I learned a lot about living with allergies over the years that I had him.

I now have three cats, four bunnies and two birds. I'm allergic to all of them. But, I'm also allergic to dust, pollen, fragrances and a host of other things. If I got rid of my pets I'd still be surrounded by allergens. I've found that the more exposure I have to my pets, the less I react. A few years ago a new cat would cause a severe allergic reaction. Then I started volunteering at a shelter in the cat section. For the first few months I could barely breathe while I was there, but now I don't react at all. Normally my bunnies don't cause me problems because I've had them for a few years. I don't even know whether I'm actually allergic to the rabbits or to their hay. But I'm definitely allergic to pollen and grass, so my system is just overloaded; therefore, I react strongly to things (e.g., my pets) that normally would just cause a minor reaction.

I've developed a lot of coping mechanisms to deal with allergies. I minimize my exposure to allergens I can live without, such as fragrances and harsh cleaning supplies. This keeps my allergic response moderately under control and allows me to keep the allergens I can't live without - that is, my pets. I don't let the cats or the bunnies in my bedroom, and I try to resist the temptation to bury my face in my pets' fur.

My brother-in-law also has pet allergies, and his asthma is much worse than mine. But, he allows his dog and his ferrets to sleep with him, even though he wakes up several times a night with difficult breathing. Personally, I think that's a bit extreme, but the point is that, for him, the trade-off is worth it. One of his ferrets is elderly and sick, and he doesn't want her to sleep alone at night. Like me, he also finds that if he minimizes his exposure to other allergens his allergic response to his pets is lessened. He's recently put a HEPA filter in his room and that has also improved things. I think it's often about compromises: my animals are important enough to me that I can live with the allergies. And I know from years of experience that a severe reaction usually improves with time and exposure.....Krista Hewitt, RN

**A doctor says.....** Most people can live with allergies and pets. A lot of people who have never had previous allergies and suddenly become reactive to their animals are told by their doctors

that they must get rid of their pets. Being a pet lover myself, I am biased against this approach, which all too many physicians prescribe off-hand, dogmatically and, dare I say, mindlessly. Perhaps parents of children with pets who do not want to keep that pet will use allergies as an excuse, especially when reinforced by a doctor's advice.

Peoples' allergic reactions (to pets) can vary from an occasional sneeze and runny nose - as is the case with most allergy sufferers - to itchy skin, rash, and flare-ups of asthma. In more severe cases, a person may even suffer from anaphylaxis, a life-threatening, sudden swelling of the face and body, with labored breathing, choking, and ultimately the closing off of the airway due to swelling inside the throat. Fortunately the last scenario is very rare, and most cases of anaphylaxis are actually triggered by certain severe food allergies or bee stings.

Some people who have frequent asthma attacks, who may require high doses of inhaled medications, or regular mask treatments, or who occasionally need an oral steroid medication called prednisone, may reasonably be advised to give up a pet if that pet has been shown to trigger the attacks. However, most allergy sufferers can happily keep their pets by taking certain measures to avoid allergy symptoms.

Three Approaches:

1. Do nothing.
2. Take nasal inhalers.
3. Use antihistamines.

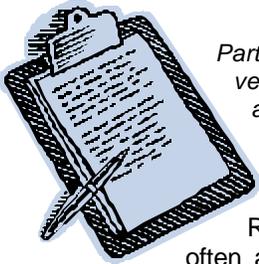
One measure I tell my allergy patients to take is 1) do nothing. There are no side effects, and many do opt simply "to put up with it". Simply not getting so close to the pet as often may help, too. Vacuuming often and using furnace filters, if applicable, to capture the dander (dead skin cells from humans and pets) as well as the "dust mites" that live on them, may also help.

Another option for those with a runny nose and sneezing as their main complaint would be 2) to ask their doctor about the use of a mild nasally inhaled anti-inflammatory medication, a steroid such as 'Flonase(TM)', or 'Nasonex (TM)'. By steroids, I do not mean Olympic athlete-type steroids, but a nasal spray form of the drug which, for the most part, stays in the nasal passages, giving less chance of the systemic side effects and risks of steroids taken orally in large doses for long periods. Still, not to overrate the side effects, I never say "never", and possible side effects may be osteoporosis, high blood pressure, skin break-down, cataracts, stomach ulcers, weight gain, mood changes, and loss of blood supply to bones like the hip, for example.

I also recommend for people with more generalized (all over) symptoms like watery eyes, itchy skin, in addition to runny nose, 3) the daily use of an antihistamine, where "histamine" is a chemical released by certain immune cells in the blood in response to an allergen (the thing causing the allergy response) which leads to the symptoms I described. Older ones like "Benedryl (TM), Chlortripolon (TM), and Atarax (TM), work well, but the main side effect is drowsiness. Newer ones, like Allegra (TM), Reactine(TM), Claritin (TM), and Aerius(TM), are designed for once-daily dosing, and reduce the side effect of drowsiness.

Being a family doctor has taught me much about people's physical, as well as emotional, needs. Every treatment or test we recommend has some risk, and telling someone simply to "give up your pet" without considering the companionship value of animals, risks an emotional insult - the very real loss of a loved one. Studies have shown that pet owners live longer and have lower average blood pressures than people without pets. This puts a physically beneficial face - as well as an emotional one - on the qualities of pet companionship.....Jon Archibald, MD, CCFP

## Improved Health Care for Rabbits (Part 2): by Linda Seeman



*Part 1 (Bunny Lu House Rabbit News Fall/Winter 2005) discussed how an increasing number of vets are becoming more knowledgeable about rabbits, and how they are performing surgery and treating them for various conditions such as Pasteurella. Part 2 discusses specific health problems and how a healthier and more natural diet can assist in keeping your bun healthy.*

Rabbits can develop **ear problems** such as ear mites and ear infections. Ear mites often affect rabbits who are neglected or have a compromised immune system and are therefore unable to fight off normal infestations and infections. Ear mites are usually identified by brown waxy exudates in the ear canal. This condition requires vet attention and rabbits with ear mites are usually treated with Ivermectin. Ear infections on the other hand can be more difficult to treat because of the shape of a rabbit's ear canal. Redness, irritation or a discharge may be located too far down in the canal to visualize. A rabbit with an ear condition usually shakes his/her head a lot and may also scratch his/her ear(s) frequently. An ear infection if severe can present as head tilt (see Spring/Summer 2005 News). Regardless, any ear infection requires immediate veterinary attention to prevent more serious conditions. While most treatment is as simple as oral antibiotics and/or eardrops, other tests such as x-rays and blood work may also be performed. Vets are just now developing surgical procedures such as bulla osteotomies to drain pus from the middle ear. While this surgery is performed in other species, it is still new to rabbits. At this point in time, the risks outweigh the benefits but the prognosis will improve as more procedures are done on bunnies.

**Dental issues** are another big health concern for both young and older buns (see Vet Consult Fall/Winter 2005). Rabbit teeth grow 5 inches per year and wear down naturally by chewing hay. But if the teeth, incisors or molars, do not line up properly (malocclusion), the wear is uneven leading to chewing difficulties like Ben (right). Young buns, especially minilops and Holland lops may have a genetic predisposition to malocclusion, often a result of poor breeding practices. As bunnies live longer, they may also experience dental problems as a result of poor diet, aging or trauma. These dental conditions can lead to all kinds of other health problems such as abscesses and weight loss. It is important to identify symptoms of dental disease such as wet chin; slobbering or runny eyes quickly so treatment can begin. Veterinary medicine is learning a lot more about dental problems in rabbits and is finding ways to treat them successfully. It is now known that clipping teeth can cause infections and abscesses due to the shattering of the tooth root (most vets now use files or dentals burrs to trim teeth); sedation/anesthesia is necessary to perform a thorough mouth exam because of the long narrow mouth and jaw; and incisors can usually be extracted without any long lasting ill effects to the bun. Injectable penicillin (not oral which is fatal to buns) is also proving to be a better alternative than surgery/bead implantation for abscesses. (See Successful Eradication of Severe Abscesses in Rabbits with Long Term Administration of Penicillin G Benzathine/Penicillin G Procaine by Marcy Rosenfield: [www.moorelab.sbs.umass.edu/~mrosenfield/bicillin](http://www.moorelab.sbs.umass.edu/~mrosenfield/bicillin))



**GI Problems** in rabbits are much better understood today than they use to be. This is mostly due to the ground breaking article "GI Stasis: the Silent Killer" by Dana Kremples ([www.bio.miami.edu/hare/ileus.htm](http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/ileus.htm)). This article taught us a lot about the normal digestive process in a rabbit and that "furballs" are **not** the major cause for stasis. Instead, the decreased movement of the GI system allows food and fur to sit and accumulate in the stomach or intestines. In fact, stress (emotional/physical or

real/perceived) causes the rabbit's GI system to slow down, drying out the stomach contents and creating gas and pain, from the mass of ingested food and fur. Quick recognition can even prevent GI stasis from becoming severe. The answer is in your bun's litter box (Baxter Jr. uses his litter box, above) ***Know what is normal for your bunny.*** If you notice his/her fecal pellets become smaller than normal, or a change in shape from round to oval, or a decrease in the quantity of fecal pellets produced in a 24-hour period, your bunny may have beginning stages of GI stasis. Encourage more hay and water and contact your vet for guidance. It may be necessary to take your bunny in for an xray to observe gas patterns, or to get subcutaneous fluids to deal with the shift of fluids from the GI system to other areas of the body. Early recognition and treatment of stasis can greatly improve the outcome. Sudden onset of GI upset can be a sign of bloat, a life-threatening emergency. (See my article, Update of Bloat in Rabbits, [www.bunnylu.org/bloat.html](http://www.bunnylu.org/bloat.html)). Veterinary medicine is also recognizing that rabbits can develop stress ulcers in their GI tract. These create scar tissue/adhesions that eventually cause obstructions, bloat and/or bleeding ulcers. Sucralfate is being prescribed more often now to assist in treating these conditions. Vets have learned that medical intervention (subcutaneous fluids, pain medication, simethicone and motility agents) is the best treatment for most GI problems in rabbits. In the past, surgery was the first line of treatment before anyone realized rabbits do not do well with abdominal surgery. Surgery may still be performed as a last resort, but the prognosis is usually poor.



Last but not least is **diet**. We now know that hay provides the fiber needed to keep the GI tract moving normally. In fact, **hay is the most single important food you can give your rabbit**, and Katie (left) agrees. Fresh veggies provide added vitamins and nutrients. Other human foods such as cereals, crackers, cookies, and fruit only delay rabbit digestion causing a buildup of bad bacteria that can lead to serious and sometimes fatal digestive disorders. Plain green rabbit pellets can still be given to a bunny but are only recommended in limited amounts to reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease. Actually, pet food

manufacturers created pellets as a convenience food for rabbit breeders who were unable (or unwilling) to provide rabbits with a more natural diet of fresh veggies and hay. You'd be surprised the number of buns we rescue who have never had hay!! It's no wonder that rabbits, who are fed a diet of hay and fresh veggies daily, even with a limited amount of pellets, are living longer healthier lives than those fed pellets only.

All these advances in rabbit medicine are allowing our rabbits to live longer than they use to. Procedures that weren't even considered just 10 years ago are being done now. It is important for all of us to understand the importance of a proper rabbit diet; to get your bun spayed/neutered at an early age by a rabbit experienced vet; and to understand and recognize the stressors and factors that lead to rabbit illness. As prey animals, rabbits have different needs and health care requirements than cats and dogs. Knowing these things and recognizing subtle changes at an early stage will help your rabbit live a longer, happier and healthier life. Now isn't that what all of us want??



Mark Your Calendars for the next Bunny Lu Open House and Fundraiser scheduled for Sunday, November 5, 2006.





## Fighting among Rabbits by Linda Seeman

Like people, not all rabbits get along. One of the reasons for this is instinct. That is, rabbits are prey animals so they have a strong sense of survival. It's that "you or me" attitude that can lead to fighting. This behavior is worsened by hormones and is the main reason it is so important to have your buns spayed/neutered by a rabbit experienced vet. In addition, you should always seek assistance when adding a companion rabbit, and be sure to

properly supervise rabbits who have not yet bonded completely. Failure to do this can result in serious injuries. Such was the case recently when Bunny Lu agreed to help someone who ended up with multiple bunnies after failure to properly sex them. Two of these minilops, both five-month old boys, lived together. It was thought they got along well until a good sized fur covered lump was discovered on the more docile of the two's back. Bunny Lu took Tony to Blue Ridge Vet Associates in Purcellville, VA where it was found that Tony (above left) had a massive abscess under his skin caused by a rabbit bite. Obviously, Tony and his brother "got into it" over something, and Tony sustained a puncture wound that became infected. The skin was not broken and there was no evidence of a scab, rather it was a hard lump with swelling. Surgery was needed immediately and was extensive since the infection had spread from Tony's back to the left front leg (abscesses are nasty). Fifteen stitches later (right), Tony is currently receiving penicillin injections, and won't be able to have his stitches removed for three weeks. Our vets think they got it all.



Proper rabbit knowledge and care can help prevent the kind of injuries Tony sustained. Supervise your rabbits closely and make sure they are spayed/neutered at the first signs of puberty (4-6 months). Baby buns will usually get along until their hormones start increasing and then you will notice scuffles and maybe even mounting behavior. Separate them when this behavior starts. While it is difficult to properly sex a young bunny, it is recommended you check the genital area often to determine sexual maturity. This is easier to do with a boy bunny since his reproductive organs are external. There are good photos of male and female buns at [www.bio.miami.edu/hare/sexing.html](http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/sexing.html) to help you identify the sex of your bunny if in doubt. However, even same sex littermates can fight during puberty. More importantly, house rabbits need to be spayed/neutered not just for fighting behavior, but also to eliminate negative behaviors such as chewing, digging, spraying and hormone related aggression, all reasons people give for getting rid of their rabbit(s).

Even if you only have one rabbit, it is a good idea to check for lumps and bumps frequently. Rub your fingers along your bunny's body and pay particular attention to the jaw area. Dental abscesses can be found early by performing this simple task. Remember, buns are prey animals and hide their illnesses very well. Early detection means earlier treatment and a better outcome.

Special thanks to  
Blue Ridge Vet Associates  
For the excellent care  
they provide our buns

120 East Cornwell Lane  
Purcellville, VA 20132  
Tel: 540-338-7387



## **His Family No Longer Wants Him.**

### **How do you tell him there isn't any space for him, and no hope for a second chance?**

Everyday, rabbits are losing their homes because of ignorance and disinterest. Some end up in an animal shelter where they have very little chance of finding a home before they are euthanized. Others are carelessly tossed out with the trash, like

Harry was (above). While Bunny Lu offers assistance and support to individuals with rabbits, it isn't always enough. So when this intervention fails, additional measures must be taken to protect a bunny's well-being. Temporary foster care provides extra time for a bunny to find a permanent and loving home. Each bunny rescued by Bunny Lu receives medical care to include a spay/neuter procedure as well as a microchip, a proper diet, toys and lots of TLC. Every effort is then made to place him in a loving and permanent home with a family who knows how to care for him.

If you can provide temporary space to a bunny awaiting a permanent home, please contact Bunny Lu. We provide training, needed supplies such as a cube cage, hay, and pellets, as well as individual guidance and assistance for this important and often lifesaving intervention. You provide a safe indoor environment, fresh veggies, and lots of TLC. Previous bunny experience is required. For more information, please contact Linda: [askrabbitleady@hotmail.com](mailto:askrabbitleady@hotmail.com) if you are unable to foster at this time, please consider a monetary donation to help with the costs of fostering. Thank you.

## **Bunny Lu Adoptions, Inc**

PO Box 1036

Manassas, VA 20108

[www.bunnylu.org](http://www.bunnylu.org)